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From: Epton, Carlton
Sent: Wed 8/17/2016 12:41:26 PM
Subject: PFOA/PFOS Clips

Air Force to replace toxic fire fighting foam

The Intell

By Christian Menno

August 15, 2016

The Air Force on Monday announced a move to replace firefighting foam — the suspected source of chemicals that have contaminated area water supplies — with more “environmentally responsible” products.

The new foam will meet military performance standards, according to the Department of Defense.

The move comes after harsh criticism from municipal officials and area residents about the military's response to water tainted by perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). The chemicals are suspected to have come from firefighting foams used at the former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster, the former Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Horsham and the active Horsham Air Guard Station.

Research into the unregulated chemicals is ongoing, but evidence is growing that links PFOA and PFOS to health effects, including various cancers.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency calls PFOS and PFOA “contaminants of concern.”

Earlier this year, the EPA updated its drinking water health advisories, setting the exposure level at 0.07 ppb for PFOS and PFOA combined.

The foam the military is switching to doesn't contain PFOS, Air Force officials said, but might still contain trace amounts of PFOA.

On the Air Force website Monday afternoon, officials said ICL Performance Products was awarded a \$6.2 million contract to replace current firefighting foams with 418,000 gallons of the new substance at all Air Force facilities. Delivery is expected to begin this month, with the process of switching the inventory wrapping up by the end of the year.

The Air Force has restricted the use of foams with PFOS and PFOA to emergencies and ordered military firefighting crews to treat any scene where that foam is used as a

hazardous site, according to the media release. All residue of the foam will be removed or destroyed before contamination can occur, officials said.

"The Air Force must continue to use AFFF in its defense operations to protect people, critical weapon systems and infrastructure, but we will do so in a more environmentally responsible way that also makes our operations safer for the public," said James Podolske Jr., the Air Force fire chief.

U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, of Pennsylvania, called the decision a "great first step" by the Air Force to address the issue. "I would urge other agencies to continue to assess what preventive steps can be taken to ensure safe water for local communities," he added.

EPA boss to hear about health concerns from diesels to oil trains at Ezra Prentice Homes

Times Union Online

Paul Grondahl

08/17/2016

Albany

Despite masks to protect them from diesel fumes, volunteers complained of dizziness and feeling ill as they counted more than 900 heavy trucks and tractor-trailers that rumbled down South Pearl Street and shook apartment walls at Ezra Prentice Homes.

"We're breathing all this toxic air day after day and it's horrible," said Deneen Carter-El, 49, who lives at Ezra Prentice with her 8-year-old daughter and twin 15-year-old sons. She has lived there for 25 years and said she has contended with headaches, sore throats and nose bleeds that she believes were caused by diesel fumes.

"We're been forgotten down here because we're poor," said Carter-El, who also was treated for thyroid cancer in 2006. "We feel they put us at the bottom of the totem pole and that's not right."

"It's hard to breathe down here with all the diesel trucks and black smoke from the oil trains," said Tammy Miller, 54, who has lived at Ezra Prentice for more than 25 years and who had a lobe of her lung removed last year as part of her cancer treatment.

"I won't even open my windows any more, no matter how hot it gets. The fumes are terrible all the time," she said.

The public housing complex is in the middle of a heavy industrial zone, with a soundtrack of clanging metal and 18-wheelers downshifting as they exit Interstate 787.

More Information

Meeting Wednesday

What: EPA regional administrator Judith Enck meeting with residents of Ezra Prentice Homes

When: 6 p.m. Wednesday

Where: Ezra Prentice Community Room, 625 S. Pearl St.

Info: Contact meeting organizer Willie White of A Village at 859-4305.

Already a focal point for anti-oil train demonstrations, the low-income residents in the federally subsidized apartments also routinely contend with a headache-inducing level of commercial truck traffic, including oil tankers and dump trucks driving to and from the Port of Albany and a nearby regional waste recycling center.

Judith Enck, regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 2 Office in New York City, will attend a Wednesday meeting at the Ezra Prentice Homes, where she will hear a range of health and safety concerns from residents.

"The EPA is committed to working with the community and with local and state government to help where we can" on a variety of environmental issues raised by residents, said EPA spokeswoman Mary Mears.

Residents believe their protests are gaining new attention after a long fight against what some call "environmental racism." Enck's visit has given new optimism to skeptical residents of the 16-building, 179-unit complex, who voiced frustration that safety concerns they've raised for years have not been addressed.

Now, they're borrowing a page from residents of Hoosick Falls, who worked with the EPA to spur action after delays by state authorities regarding drinking water tainted with perfluorooctanic acid, or PFOA, a man-made chemical that is toxic.

"We've heard over and over again from Ezra Prentice residents that they don't understand all the attention being given to Hoosick Falls when nothing is happening with their health concerns," said Stacy Pettigrew, a doctoral student in the School of Public Health at the University at Albany and a South End environmental activist. "I think environmental racism is a fitting term in this case."

On Tuesday, the state Department of Environmental Conservation announced it will invest \$500,000 in an environmental improvement program to address air contamination in the South End. The program, funded through the \$300 million Environmental Protection Fund, will include air monitoring to evaluate the impact of diesel emissions on the neighborhood.

In the same announcement, Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos called on EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to strengthen national emission and fuel standards to increase the protection of public health.

Local elected officials said action was overdue.

"The fact that the EPA is coming shows that Ezra Prentice residents' health concerns are gaining momentum because we weren't getting any attention for a long time," said Vivian Kornegay, who represents the 2nd Ward on the Common Council, which covers the portion of the complex 20 or 30 yards from railroad tracks where oil tanker cars are parked and sometimes idle for long periods.

"These are significant health and safety issues that have been under the radar for a long time," said Dorsey Applrys, a Common Council member who represents the 1st Ward and part of the complex. "Residents I've spoken with are tired of more meetings. They want action."

Organizers recently met with U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, state legislators and county and local officials to raise residents' concerns.

Meanwhile, A Village Inc., a South End grass-roots community activist group, is conducting a health survey of residents with the assistance of the UAlbany's School of Public Health and graduate students from UAlbany, Albany Medical College and Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

Early results show 53 of 77 households surveyed reported asthma problems.

"This new energy and optimism is exciting after so many promises were made to the folks at Ezra Prentice for so many years," said Willie White, executive director of A Village. "We are saying that this community matters also and we want to bring awareness to their health issues."

The Ezra Prentice Homes were built in 1966 in conjunction with New York state, and Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller's name is at the top of the bronze construction plaque.

The property was transferred to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the mid-1980s and is run by the Albany Housing Authority.

The complex is named for Ezra Parmalee Prentice, a New Hampshire native born in 1797 who came to Albany in the 1820s and made his fortune selling wholesale furs, developing railroads and running a bank. He was president of the National Commercial Bank and founder of the New York State Agricultural Society. He raised prized cattle on his sprawling farm known as Mount Hope and built a mansion on the hillside above where the apartment complex now stands just off Mount Hope Drive. He died in 1876 and his grandson, Ezra P. Prentice, married Alta Rockefeller, daughter of John D. Rockefeller.

The backstory of wealth earns sneers for its heavy irony from veteran activists Tom McPheeters and Dominick Calsolaro, members of A Village who are deeply involved with efforts to assist Ezra Prentice residents.

"I see a lot of parallels to the Hoosick Falls water pollution situation," McPheeters said. "That's a middle-class white community and they still had a terrible time getting anyone's attention. Imagine how much harder it is for a low-income black community like Ezra Prentice to get noticed."

"I live a mile away and I hear the clanging and banging from the oil trains being coupled and uncoupled every day from midnight to 4 a.m.," said Calsolaro, a former Common Council member. "Then the heavy trucks start shaking those apartments from early morning to late at night. That puts the residents under continuous stress."

They've explored solutions, including rerouting the truck traffic, constructing a noise-reducing wall and conducting air-quality testing, but costs and government bureaucracy created obstacles.

"None of the solutions is an easy or a cheap fix," McPheeters said. "The Albany Housing Authority is in a terrible bind. They just can't eliminate Ezra Prentice because they've spent a lot of money rehabbing it over the past 10 years. It was just a bad location from the beginning. Who wants to live in an industrial zone?"

Gillibrand Wants Blood Testing for Newburgh Residents After PFOS Contamination

By TWC News Web Staff

Tuesday, August 16, 2016 at 01:30 PM EDT

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand wants blood tests for Newburgh residents after high levels of PFOS were discovered in the city's drinking water source.

Gillibrand is urging the CDC to partner with the state Department of Health to offer blood testing for PFOS to Newburgh residents. She said residents deserve to know the extent of their exposure to the contaminant.

Since the discovery of the contamination, the city switched its drinking water source from Washington Lake to the Catskill Aqueduct.

The Stewart Air National Guard Base is suspected to be the source of the contaminant.

Last week, the base was declared a Superfund site because of the ongoing water

Gillibrand requests blood testing for Newburgh residents exposed to toxic chemical

Politico

By Scott Waldman

08/16/16 01:33 PM EDT

ALBANY — Senator Kirsten Gillibrand wants the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assist the state Department of Health in providing blood tests for the residents of Newburgh who were exposed to a toxic chemical in their water supply.

On Tuesday, Gillibrand sent a letter to Dr. Patrick Breyse, director of the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, requesting the blood tests. Thousands of residents were likely exposed to dangerous levels of PFOS for an unknown period of time. Earlier this summer, Gillibrand traveled to Hoosick Falls, where residents were exposed to a similar chemical, and recently said people exposed to the toxic chemical would need bio-monitoring.

“While we do not yet know what specific level of PFOS in a person's blood might result in adverse health effects, blood test results can provide the following benefits: help shed light on the extent of residents’ exposure to PFOS; enable residents to compare their PFOS blood levels to those in other communities where residents have been exposed to elevated levels of PFOS and other PFAS; and be added to residents’ medical files to help inform their discussions with medical providers,” she wrote.

The state health department has not publicly revealed any plans to blood-test residents of Newburgh, even as it has offered testing in other communities effected by PFOA, a similar chemical. The city of Newburgh's public water supply tested positive for elevated levels of PFOS in May, and was switched to an alternative source. The PFOS, which was twice the EPA’s recommended safety limit, was recently traced to a nearby air base.

Perfluorooctane sulfonate is used in firefighting foam particularly that used in airports. On Friday, the state Department of Environmental Conservation declared the Stewart Air National Guard Base in Orange County a state Superfund site. The DEC found that the U.S. Department of Defense was a “potentially responsible party” for the PFOS contamination in Newburgh. Some of the highest PFOS contamination levels ever detected, at 5,900 parts per trillion, were found in the water supply.

Medical professionals who study toxic chemicals say blood tests are an important tool to monitor patient health, and the state has been conducting blood tests for residents of Petersburg and Hoosick Falls for months. The chemicals have been linked to a

number of health problems, including cancer, thyroid problems and high cholesterol. Depending on the level of exposure, it can take the body years to flush the chemicals out of its system.

The state legislative hearings on issues surround the state and federal response to the PFOA crisis in Hoosick Falls begin August 30th, with a joint Assembly and Senate hearing on water quality issues to be held in Albany on September 7.